

For Pets

AUTUMN 2017

ROCKY START

DEATH'S DOOR PUP
LANDS ON HIS PAWS

PLUS
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Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SCO40154)

A ROCKY START

He wasn't a Labrador, and he wasn't healthy

Ten days before Christmas Eve, a couple purchased what they thought would become a much-loved pet; a Labrador puppy, fit and ready to go home, up for sale on a classified advertising website. They agreed to meet the breeder (or so they thought) in a car park. Money changed hands, and the wriggly ball of fluff named Rocky came home with them.

Within hours of bringing him home, Rocky, was flat, floppy and very ill. There was clearly something very wrong. He had vomited several times during the night and had an upset stomach too. He wasn't interested in food, and although he tried to drink water, he could not keep it down. Desperate for help, the owners rang the breeder, but there was no reply. Less than 24 hours after he was bought, Rocky was at the nearest vet. He would need special intensive treatment if he was to survive. Caught totally unprepared for a very sick pet and unable to afford private vet fees, his owners rushed him to our Victoria animal hospital and made the heartbreaking decision to part with him, asking that we find him a new home should he recover

Deathly disease

"Rocky was at death's door when he arrived in our care," said Amanda Marrington, Blue Cross Animal Welfare Officer. "He was weak, emaciated and suffering from parvovirus and we didn't think he would survive the night."

Parvovirus is a highly infectious disease that can kill puppies quickly. It is entirely preventable with a simple vaccination. It is very contagious in unvaccinated puppies, especially where hygiene is poor, so sadly, the other puppies in Rocky's litter are likely to have suffered a similar fate.

The advertising of puppies online, before completing the sale at a public location, is an increasingly worrying trend, and more and more dangerously ill pets who have been bought in this way are being treated by Blue Cross vets.

Rocky needed intervention fast if he was to make it. We placed him in our isolation unit to keep others safe from the potential spread of infection, and to give him a quiet space to rest and recover.

Hannah Dennis, Veterinary Nurse at Victoria, was one of a team who made sure he found the strength to survive. She explains: "It was touch and go with Rocky. Puppies that young are at real risk of death from parvovirus because if they can't eat and are losing fluids, they aren't getting the vital nutrients they need to survive.

"Rocky needed encouragement to eat. We fed him by hand every two hours, little and often, to build up his strength without giving him too much and making him sick."

Hannah offered the youngster tiny mouthfuls on a fingertip and eventually he began to fancy eating from his food bowl on his own. This, and the fact he kept trying to chew through his drip, were positive signs that Rocky was on the road to recovery. And so, after nine days in intensive care, Rocky left the hospital and travelled to our Hertfordshire rehoming centre.

Parvovirus
A highly infectious disease that can kill puppies quickly.



SAVED BY A SQUEAK

Thank goodness he squeaked. If he'd have stayed silent, we may never have known a tiny, helpless hamster was inside the pile of rubbish dumped on our hospital doorstep, and his potential fate doesn't bear thinking about.

Kickers is a happy and healthy Syrian hamster now, who lives a cushy life with new owner Sam Murray. She says: "I was so sad when I heard that this little guy had been dumped in the street; it was such a cold morning and anything could have happened to him. As soon as I saw him I just wanted to help him and give him a loving, warm home. He's such a character and very clever. I'm glad I've been able to give him another chance at being a wonderful pet."

Kickers is named after the branded shoebox he was placed in, inside an exercise ball. The box was wrapped in a plastic bag, which thankfully insulated him from the harsh frost of that cold January morning. The sweet little thing was discovered by Blue Cross Veterinary Nurse Tracey Parnell right outside our Hammersmith hospital in West London on her way in to work.

Tracey said: "We are all shocked someone abandoned him as he could have easily escaped or got hypothermia or died from the freezing temperatures.



Kickers on arrival at our Hammersmith hospital

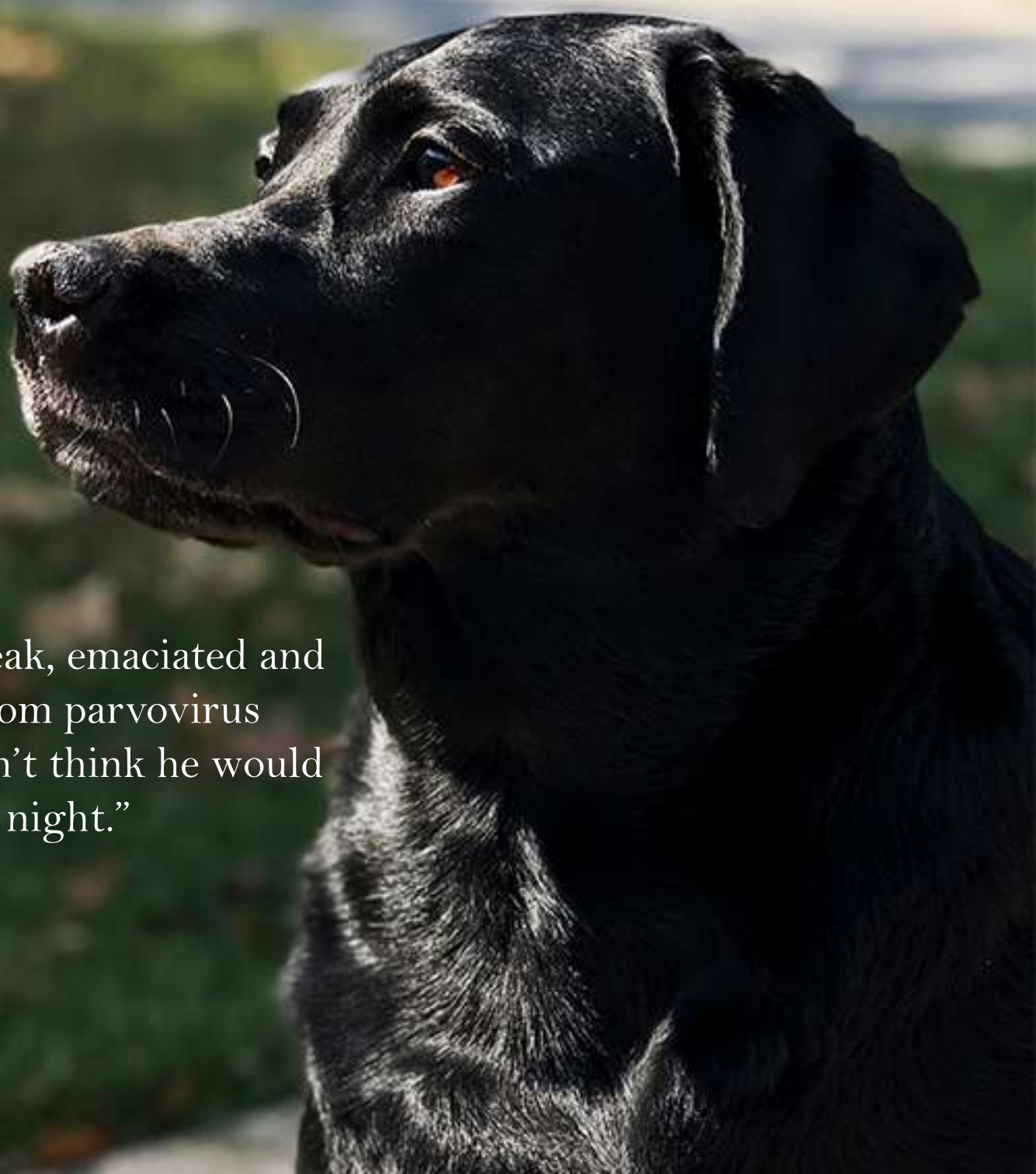
"He was very stressed and was squealing when I opened the ball up to see what was inside as I thought it was a bag of rubbish. It's unusual for a hamster to make this noise and they only do in the most threatening or stressful of situations."

We warmed him up and he started to eat straight away. Once settled he was examined by our vet and found to be fit, healthy and friendly, despite his ordeal. Kickers was the second rodent within a week to be dumped outside a Blue Cross animal hospital inside an exercise ball, after rat Vivienne was found outside Victoria hospital just days before.

Kickers is now happy and loved. He's being treated for mites when we visit him, so his ears look a little crusty. His Blue Cross Vet, Seb Prior, says the stress of being abandoned is the likely cause of the pesky pests increasing in number, and he'll be just fine with treatment.

This hamster's tale has a happy ending, and it's all thanks to our wonderful supporters for making this possible.





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